

Book Review: The Note  
By Alafair Burke

Thanks to NetGalley and Knopf, Pantheon, Vintage & Anchor for an advance copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. “The Note” by Alastair Burke was published on January 7, 2025.

I will say it up front, I was not impressed with this book. It felt like Burke was trying to write two different stories or merge several plot ideas into one. For me, it didn’t work. Let me explain.

The story focuses on three women – May, Lauren and Kelsey – who have been friends since they met more than a decade ago at a youth arts camp in New Hampshire. They’ve planned a reunion weekend in the Hamptons on Long Island, and at first it seems their relationships pick up right where they left off.

Then a prank goes horribly wrong. A car driven by a young man and woman swipes a prized parking space from the three women. Kelsey – without telling the others – leaves a note (written by Lauren) on the car’s windshield. That sets off a chain of events embroiling the three women in a murder investigation when the man who was driving the car disappears.

One problem I had with the book was how long it took – nearly one-third of the way through – to get to the point of the note being left on the car’s windshield. Until then, the narrative reads like a chick flick with seemingly pointless banter between the three friends.

The next third, as the investigation begins to unfold, picks up some steam and gained more of my interest – despite the plot being a bit of a stretch.

But the last third of the book is much too convoluted. Almost everyone – from an over-protective father to his estranged stepson to the women themselves – becomes a suspect when the man who disappeared is found dead. The bouncing back and forth between present events

and backstory that attempts to explain why characters are behaving and interacting as they are made my head spin. And it becomes clear that these three friends who profess to be as close as sisters have been lying to each other for years.

The ending was incredibly hokey, totally tilting the believability scale to the negative side. I won't give anything away, but it seemed like Burke just needed a neat and clean way to end the story, regardless of its lack of plausibility.

So, from slow moving beginning to rapid fire mid-section, to unrealistic ending, "The Note" just didn't do much for me. Two stars. There's just not enough here to make the story Note-worthy.

And check out all of my reviews at my Raised on Reading ([www.raisedonreading.com](http://www.raisedonreading.com)) book blog.